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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

REPORT

SUBJECT Details of 7 Jun 53 Riot, Orlova/Other Protests against
Czechoslovak Currency Reform

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"The currency reform infuriated the housewives the most. They did not want their husbands to go to work. Plenty of men did not report to work. The Krajina Odborova Rada (County Committee of the Communist trade unions) issued an order on posters for people to return to work; otherwise they would be arrested as saboteurs of the Five-Year Economic Program. The workers who had missed six shifts were called out, under a special law, to join PTP battalions of the regular Czechoslovak Army. (These PTP battalions are composed of 'non-reliable' citizens, not equipped with weapons, who are obliged to work in the mines, in army uniform, under military law for three-five years or more. These PTP battalions consist of men of all ages, 20-60.)"

"The peasants made no protests and showed no marked reactions toward the currency reform. The principal dissatisfied elements were miners, factory workers and minor clerks. The administrative officials of the coal mine [redacted], including the engineers and foremen, do not receive their wages if the pit does not fulfill its quotas for the Five-Year plan, but the miners and ordinary workers do. [redacted] a mining engineer and of many foremen who missed their salary for the month /date not clear; May?/. [redacted] near Moravska Ostrava, especially in the power plants there, many clerks and technical officers

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received no salary during that month -- but the ordinary workers did."

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3. [] known Communists among those who openly opposed the reform []

[] plenty of CP members who were dissatisfied with the currency reform. For example, the members of the workers' militia [] who received only 300 Crowns, changed at the rate of 1 : 5, failed to report at work for two days. The Communist housewives opposed the reform because they couldn't buy unlimited amounts of sugar, only 1 kg each. The shopkeepers were required to register the names and addresses of all persons who asked for more than 1 kg of sugar or other food items. These persons were later checked by a special commission from the local Soviet (MNV)."

4. [] demonstrations or strikes prior to the riots reported on 6 and 7 Jun 53 in Moravska Ostrava []

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[] no demonstrations other than those in the main square at Orlova, when soldiers marched on a mob of 5000-10,000 persons massed before the local Soviet of Orlova. The soldiers stopped marching toward the rioters when the people shouted the slogan: 'Armada jde vzdy s litem' - 'The army goes always with the people!'"

5. [] the cause of the riot []

"The immediate cause of the riot of 7 Jun 53 was the activity of three male workers and two women, who were made responsible for the riot. Their arrest was announced later on posters issued by the Krajska Odborova Rada at Moravska Ostrava."

6. [] time of day [] the riots start []

"The riots started at 9:30 AM and lasted until 12:00 PM on 7 Jun 53. Then the rioters returned home voluntarily. The riot was not organized. The five persons arrested had made very little effort to organize it."

7.

8.

9.

10.

[] five persons were arrested on the second day following the riots. One of the three men was a former constable (cetnik).

1. [] the effect of their arrest []

"Everybody expected that somebody would have to be made responsible for the riots. Therefore, the workers were not surprised at the arrest."

2. [] the participants in the riots factory workers, [] other groups join in []

"Many social groups seemed to be present: mostly miners, workers, housewives but even some CP members."

3. [] known Communists participate in the rioting []

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[redacted] besides march through the streets [redacted]

"The rioters shouted, 'We don't like the new president, Zapotocky, and his currency reform!' They stood at least three hours in front of the MNV of Orlova waiting for something to happen."

[redacted] other methods of protest did the workers use besides rioting [redacted]

[redacted] there was a strike on 8 and 9 Jun 53 at the Zapotocky coal pit and also at the Zofie coal pit. The miners did not report to work." 50X1-HUM

[redacted] violence in these other protests [redacted]

"Violences were reported from the Zapotocky Pit. The strikers and the strike-breakers fought each other. The workers' militia was the only force used against the strikers. There were many injuries and one man was killed."

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